

**Amendments to the Claims**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims**

Claims 1-18 (cancelled)

Claim 19 (new): A preparation comprising *Bifidobacterium breve* and a mixture of at least two non-digestible soluble carbohydrate components A and B, wherein said carbohydrate component A has a different structure from said carbohydrate component B;

said carbohydrate component A is present in an amount of 5 to 95% by weight of the sum of carbohydrate components A and B;

at least 50% of the total non-digestible soluble carbohydrates is selected from disaccharides to eicosasaccharides; and

carbohydrate components A and B differ in the average number of monosaccharide units, carbohydrate component A having an average chain length which is at least 5 monosaccharide units lower than the average chain length of component B.

Claim 20 (new): The preparation according to claim 19, wherein said carbohydrate components A and B differ in the structure of the monosaccharide units of the carbohydrate.

Claim 21 (new): The preparation according to claim 19, wherein said carbohydrate component A is selected from non-digestible monosaccharides up to hexasaccharides of the same carbohydrate structure, and said carbohydrate component B is selected from non-digestible heptasaccharides and higher polysaccharides of the same carbohydrate structure.

Claim 22 (new): The preparation according to claim 19, wherein the carbohydrate component A comprises 5 to 60 wt% and the carbohydrate component B comprises 5 to 40 wt%, with  $A + B = 100 \text{ wt\%}$ .

Claim 23 (new): The preparation according to claim 19, wherein at least 60 wt% of said carbohydrate component A belongs to the group of galacto-oligosaccharides.

Claim 24 (new): The preparation according to claim 19, wherein at least 80 to 100 wt% of said carbohydrate component A belongs to the group of trans-galacto-oligosaccharides.

Claim 25 (new): The preparation according to claim 19, wherein at least 60 wt% of said carbohydrate component B belongs to the group of fructo-polysaccharides, including inulin.

Claim 26 (new): The preparation according to claim 19, wherein at least 80 to 100 wt% of said carbohydrate component B belongs to the group of fructo-polysaccharides, including inulin.

Claim 27 (new): The preparation according to claim 19, comprising  $10^5$  to  $10^{11}$  cfu of *Bifidobacterium breve* per g of total non-digestible soluble carbohydrate.

Claim 28 (new): A supplement, comprising the preparation according to claim 19, wherein the probiotic *Bifidobacterium breve* is present in the supplement in an amount of  $1 \times 10^5$  to  $1.5 \times 10^{11}$  cfu/g, calculated on the basis of the supplement.

Claim 29 (new): An infant nutrition supplement, comprising the preparation according to claim 19, wherein the *Bifidobacterium breve* is present in the supplement in an amount of  $1 \times 10^2$  to  $1 \times 10^{12}$  cfu/g of the infant supplement.

Claim 30 (new): The infant nutrition supplement according to claim 29, further comprising nutrients selected from the group consisting of a digestible carbohydrate, a lipid source, a protein source, and a mixture thereof.

Claim 31 (new): A method of normalizing *Bifidobacterium* species composition in the gastro-intestinal tract of non- or partially breast-fed infants to that of the composition in breast-fed infants, comprising manufacturing a composition comprised of the preparation according to claim 19.

Claim 32 (new): A method of preventing or treating one or more immune disorders, comprising manufacturing a composition comprised of the preparation according to claim 19.

Claim 33 (new): The method according to claim 32, wherein said immune disorders are selected from the group consisting of allergy, atopy, allergic rhinitis, food hypersensitivity, atopic dermatitis, eczema and asthma.

Claim 34 (new): The method according to claim 32, wherein said immune disorders are selected from the group consisting of diarrhoea and viral diarrhoea.

Claim 35 (new): A method of preventing and/or treating energy malabsorption, comprising manufacturing a composition comprised of the preparation according to claim 19.

Claim 36 (new): A method for inhibiting the infiltration of eosinophils, neutrophils and mononuclear cells in allergic lesions, inhibiting a Th2 type immune response and/or stimulating the Th1-mediated immune response, comprising manufacturing a composition comprised of the preparation according to claim 19.

Claim 37 (new): A method for decreasing the relative amounts of *Bifidobacterium catenulatum*, *B. pseudocatenulatum* and/or *B. adolescentis* in the gastro-intestinal tract of non- or partially breast-fed infants, comprising manufacturing a mixture of at least two non-digestible soluble carbohydrate components A and B, wherein

said carbohydrate component A is present in an amount of from 5 to 95% by weight of the sum of carbohydrate components A and B;

at least 50% of the total non-digestible soluble carbohydrates is selected from disaccharides to eicosasaccharides; and

said carbohydrate components A and B differ (i) in the average number of monosaccharides units of the carbohydrate, (ii) in the structure of the monosaccharide units of the carbohydrate, or (iii) both.